

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing a location query service for use with a wireless network that tracks locations of network users, the method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving from a requestor a query asking for location information

5 associated with a wireless network user;

b) retrieving the location information associated with the wireless network user; and

c) forwarding the location information to the requestor.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the query includes an identification of the wireless network user.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the identification is one of a user name, a telephone number, an Internet address, and an email address.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving and the step of forwarding comprise communications over a global computer network.

15 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving and the step of forwarding comprise communications over a Public Switched Telephone Network.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the location information comprises identifying a wireless device associated with the wireless network user and determining a location of the wireless device.

7. The method claim 1, further comprising translating the location information from raw form to displayable form.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the location information comprises using a location system to determine the location of a network device
5 associated with the wireless network user.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the location information comprises consulting a location database that is periodically updated by a location system.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of authenticating that the requestor is authorized to receive the location information before delivering the location information to the requestor.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of authenticating comprises:

(i) receiving a list of authorized requestors from the wireless network user;

15 (ii) receiving a requestor identification in the query; and

(iii) using the requestor identification to verify whether the requestor is on the list.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step of authenticating comprises:

(i) receiving a requestor identification in the query;

(ii) forwarding to the wireless network user the requestor identification and a request for the requestor to receive the location information; and

(iii) receiving from the wireless network user approval for the requestor to receive the location information.

5 13. A system for providing a location query service comprising:

a) a wireless network in communication with a plurality of wireless network devices;

b) a location system in communication with the wireless network, the location system providing location information associated with the plurality of wireless network devices; and

c) a location server in communication with the wireless network and a plurality of requestors, wherein the location server is adapted to receive a location query for a network user from a requestor, to retrieve the network user's location information provided by the location system, and to forward the location information to the requestor.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the location server is further adapted to confirm that the requestor is authorized to receive the location information.

15. The system of claim 14, further comprising a list of authorized requestors that is accessible to the location server, wherein the location server confirms that the requestor is authorized by verifying that the requestor is on the list.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein the location server confirms that the requestor is authorized by sending an access request to a network user about whom the requestor wishes to learn location information.

17. The system of claim 13, wherein the location system is at least one of a handheld location system and a network-based location system.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the handheld location system is a global positioning system.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the network-based location system is one of a Wireless Access Protocol location service and a triangulation system.

20. The system of claim 13, further comprising a mapping converter that translates the location information provided by the location system from raw form to displayable form.

21. The system of claim 13, further comprising a global computer network in communication with the location server and the plurality of requestors, wherein the global computer network facilitates communication between the location server and the plurality of requestors.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the global computer network is the Internet.

23. The system of claim 21, wherein the plurality of requestors have requestor devices with messaging capabilities and the global computer network facilitates messaging between the location server and the requestor devices.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the message capabilities are one of audio-based, text-based, and graphical.

25. The system of claim 23, wherein the global computer network includes a graphical user interface through which the plurality of requestors can submit
5 location queries.

26. The system of claim 23, wherein the requestor devices are Wireless Access Protocol compatible thin clients having thin browsers adapted to access the global computer network and to communicate with the location server.

27. The system of claim 23, wherein the requestor devices are personal
10 computers.

28. The system of claim 13, further comprising a Public Switched Telephone Network in communication with the location server and the plurality of requestors, wherein the Public Switched Telephone Network facilitates communication between the location server and the plurality of requestors.

15 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the Public Switched Telephone Network includes one of an interactive voice response unit and an automatic call distributor, through which the plurality of requestors can submit location queries.

30. A location server that provides a location query service for use with a wireless network that tracks locations of network users, the location server
20 comprising:

a) a communication input adapted to receive a location query from a requestor;

b) a service logic processor adapted to read the location query, to identify from the location query a network user about whom the requestor wishes to receive location information, to obtain the location information of the network user, and to return the location information to the requestor; and

c) a communication output adapted to forward the location information to the requestor.

31. The location server of claim 30, further comprising a memory storage that stores relationships between network user identifications and device identifications, enabling the service logic processor to obtain the location information of the network user by instructing a location system to determine a device location of a device associated with the network user.

32. The location server of claim 30, further comprising a memory storage that contains an authorized requestor list for the network user,

wherein the service logic processor is further adapted to verify that the requestor is on the authorized requestor list before returning the location information to the requestor.

33. The location server of claim 30, further comprising a mapping converter that translates the location information from raw form to displayable form.

34. The location server of claim 30, wherein the communication input and the communication output are compatible with one of a global computer network and a Public Switched Telephone Network.

35. A method for providing a location query service for use with a wireless

5 network that tracks locations of network users, the method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving from a requestor a query asking for location information associated with a wireless network user, wherein the query contains a requestor identification;

b) forwarding to the wireless network user the requestor identification and a request for the requestor to receive the location information; and

c) receiving from the wireless network user a response indicating whether the requestor can receive the location information.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein the response permits the requestor to receive the location information and the method further comprises the steps of:

d) retrieving the location information associated with the wireless network user; and

e) forwarding the location information to the requestor.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein the response prohibits the requestor from receiving the location information and the method further comprises the step of returning a message to the requestor reporting that the query has been denied.

38. A method for tracking the location of a supervised person comprising the
5 steps of:

a) provisioning the supervised person with a wireless device that operates on a location-tracking wireless network;

b) enabling the supervised person to use the wireless device for its primary purpose;

10 c) receiving a location query from a supervisor of the supervised person asking for a location of the supervised person;

d) determining the location of the supervised person using the location-tracking wireless network; and

e) reporting the location of the supervised person to the supervisor.

15 39. The method of claim 38, wherein the supervised person is a service technician.

40. The method of claim 38, wherein the wireless device is a cellular telephone and the primary purpose is personal voice communication.